Readings Booklet June 2000 English 33 Part B: Reading Grade 12 Diploma Examination

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June 2000
English 33
Part B: Reading
Readings Booklet
Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 33 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 8 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Time: This examination was developed to be completed in 2 hours; however, you may take an additional ½ hour to complete the examination.

Budget your time carefully.

Instructions

- Be sure that you have an English 33
 Readings Booklet and an English 33
 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.

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I. Questions 1 to 8 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a story.

In this excerpt, set in the American Midwest, the narrator, his wife Liz, and their son Tom go skating on the family pond.

from GOOD WILL

After dinner, . . . I suggest that we go skating in the moonlight, all together. The pond is hidden from the house by trees. . . . It is a biggish pond, though, almost an acre, fed by a little stream. It was dammed a hundred years ago at least, and they did such a good job that all I have had to do is replace a few stones from time to time. The night is moonless and starry, cold and still. There has been no snow since we last skated, so the ice is clear, fluorescent. Impatient, Tom skates away from us, backward, awkward but determined. This is something he has just learned this year. I watch Liz put on her white figure skates. She pulls the strings tight, ties them carefully, businesslike, but then she leans back and points her toes, as if the skates were ballet slippers, and admires them. She is the skater of us all, having taken lessons as a child. Our skates are good ones, have lasted since our marriage. Her mother was going to give us china and linens. We asked for skates as if we were taking a political position, so she gave us custom-made Canadian skates. Her revenge was that we had to go to the sports store for three separate fittings.

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On skates, Liz is not immediately transformed. Her flat-footed personality clings at first—her overalls are baggy, her old down coat makes her thick and matter-of-fact, she keeps her hands in her pockets. She cuts across the pond four times, picking up twigs and other trash. She tempts me to stop watching her, but I don't. I might miss the moment when her arms spread, her head turns, and she suddenly slips into a big backward circle, lazy but sharp, her body as silver and definite as a trout's. Then she is moving backward on one leg, the other leg straight behind her, toe pointed. Her head is flat, turned, her arms flung beyond her head. An invisible thread looped through her outstretched skate seems to be towing her across the ice. She finishes with a spin, and her hat flies off. Tom retrieves it and returns it to her. They embrace, and she takes his hand and twirls him around. He stumbles but keeps his feet, laughing.

Now it is my turn. I haven't mastered much, but I can go fast, and the acre of the pond is hardly big enough to contain me when I am really in the mood. I begin by drifting around the edge, getting the feel of the ice, of my skates, of my legs and lower back, stroking, gliding, crossing into a turn. It is soothing and

stimulating at the same time, so easy that I am tempted, as always, to go off into my own arabesque¹ and triple jump. There is no reason why not. The body is willing, tingles with anticipation. Except that the readiness is an illusion, and all I have ever done is to go forward, fast, and backward, slowly. I make myself settle down. In the middle of the pond, Tommy is practicing, staring at his feet. I skate a circle around him.

"What are you trying to do, son?"

"There's a way you can turn your skates to stop so that they shoot some snow into the air. Mommy can do it."

"Don't you have to be going pretty fast?"

"I'm going fast."

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I skate away in a big loop and return, orbit him, and skate away again. Across the pond, Liz is cutting figure eights, trying to track the same circles over and over again. Tommy continues to flail through a few big strides, slide, and then stop. He never falls, but he never looks like he is skating, either, more like he is leaping through shallow surf. I skate another ring around him, and then the phrase comes to me, "running rings around him." I wonder if it's possible, especially if he had some direction across the pond and no reason to limit his speed. I loop him again, this time orbiting like a planet instead of a comet, Mars, say. Earth. Venus. "Hey, watch out," he shouts. Back to Mars. Out to Jupiter, so that he doesn't get self-conscious. It is a strange and exhilarating feeling, circling him like this, sort of stroboscopic.² The pleasure is watching his intensity revealed sequentially—in his face, his taut left arm, the arc of his shoulders, his right hip, his back again. I can even trick myself into thinking I am stationary and he is doing a slow, impossible spin here in the glinting blue darkness. I am a camera. I am a fence, a palisade, a moat, enclosing him. Now he looks up and sighs, glances at me, and begins to skate away. The real test. I turn and skate after him, one loop: I make a silly face, he laughs. Around his back, then another loop—they have to be tight, which slows me down, makes them harder. I throw my arms out, stick out my tongue. He laughs again, then speeds up. Now I am almost chasing him, the hare after the tortoise. He heads for his mother. The distance between them begins to close up. I put on speed, flatten my ring, go straight at them. "Hey, Mom," he calls. Her arm goes out, oblivious. Between them is a doorway, a window, the 65 eye of a needle. I shoot through it, brushing both of them lightly with the flapping tails of my coat. "Hey!" says Liz. I imagine them falling into one another's arms.

Continued

At the end of the pond I turn around, flushed with adrenaline. Tom is

¹arabesque—a graceful ballet position in which the dancer stands on one leg ²stroboscopic—the effect created by a succession of short pulses of light from a lamp

showing Liz how he has learned to stop. She is praising him. I would like to skate rings around the two of them, slow, lazy orbits lasting days, a ritual of
discreet containment, nothing coercive, no fences in the open pasture, only an alert dog at one end.

Jane Smiley
Contemporary American novelist

II. Questions 9 to 15 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

COMPARING BEGINNINGS

Both of us have early memories of escape. You, when you were three years old, walked out an open window and up a hill. The day was hot: you were free and peaceful.

A black man found you and coaxed you home again. You learned later that the hill was the home of dangerous snakes.

At the same age I ran away

10 out of our backyard, across the road
to the home of an old neighbour woman
with a face like a nutcracker
who wore a flannel cap¹ in the daytime.
She fed me sugar cookies

and played on the cranked-up gramophone a record of fiddle music to which I danced on the kitchen floor while her old bachelor brother step-danced and snapped his fingers

20 on the other side of the room. And my mother came to take me home and scold me and said to my father later that she didn't trust the old bachelor brother

one little bit: he was no better than he should be.

After that escape, you and I both wore halters to prevent us from straying

30 into dangerous places that looked green and peaceful where there might be siren music² or poisonous snakes.

> Elizabeth Brewster Contemporary Canadian poet, novelist, and short story writer

¹flannel cap—nightcap; a cap worn in bed

²siren music—in Greek mythology, music of the sea nymphs who sang seductively to travellers at sea, causing them to steer their ships onto the rocks

III. Questions 16 to 25 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a play.

Apartheid is a policy based on a belief that different races should be granted unequal privileges and status. This policy segregates races, with the white minority holding political power and control. Until the 1994 election in the Republic of South Africa, the doctrine of apartheid was official government policy throughout the country.

This scene is set on November 24, 1975, at Oxford University, England. Colin is trying to persuade Nelson to speak at a student demonstration being organized to support the black African independence movement.

from SCENES FROM SOWETO

CHARACTERS:

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NELSON MALUBANE—a black South African in his twenties COLIN—an English student in his twenties IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL SPECIAL BRANCH OFFICER

SCENE 1

COLIN: . . . This is important. We desperately need someone.

NELSON: You have Charlie Thompson . . . and you. Why don't you speak?

COLIN: No, we need an African, a South African, and you're the only one we've got in the college. Suppose I just introduce you, and you get up and say, "Angola is free today. South Africa tomorrow."

NELSON: That's facile.¹

COLIN: Well, think of something else. This is important. We have to show people that what is happening in Angola relates to the whole of South Africa.

Mozambique became independent in June. Angola tomorrow. After that Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa.

NELSON Perfect. I told you, you didn't need me.

COLIN: But we do. We must show international solidarity. You could serve as a symbol. At least allow me to introduce you.

15 NELSON: No, man, I'm not good at being a symbol.

COLIN: Yes, you are. You're a beautiful symbol, beautiful.

NELSON: Thank you, but really . . . I'm an individual. I prefer not to be used. If you're so keen to have a South African, call up Anti-Apartheid.

¹facile—arrived at without due care, effort, or examination; superficial

COLIN: There's no time. Anyway, it would mean so much more if you spoke,

because people know you and respect you.

NELSON: Colin, I'm planning to go back.

COLIN: What?

NELSON: I haven't seen my family in three years.

COLIN: You're going back to South Africa?

25 NELSON: I know it means nothing to you, but I am the eldest son. My father is an invalid. My mother needs me to help raise my nine sisters and brothers. Even now I send part of my grant home to help them out.

COLIN (Shaking his head): You actually want to go back to South Africa?

NELSON: Man, you don't understand. I've got to support them.

30 COLIN: Get a job here. With your brains you can have your pick, and then you can bring them over.

NELSON: You don't understand. South Africa is my home.

COLIN: Are you crazy?

NELSON: Things are changing . . . slowly.

35 COLIN: Changing? Yeah, they're getting worse. This Bantustan homelands policy² is a complete charade to make the Africans even more dependent on the whites. It's a smoke screen. It's a con, like this business of allowing a few multiracial games to improve their image in the Western world. Do you think that because some of the firms are starting to employ a few more

Africans it's going to make any fundamental difference to the doctrine of apartheid? If you want change, you'll have to fight for it. Armed struggle is the only answer.

NELSON: Armed struggle?

COLIN: Yes, armed struggle. It has worked in Mozambique and Angola.

45 NELSON: But they were colonies. South Africa has four million whites.

COLIN: And twenty million blacks!

NELSON: Man, you are so naïve. It's easy for you sitting in England, being white, middle class. South Africa has British Leyland tanks, Mirage jets, soon the atom bomb. Armed struggle! No, man, things are going to change from the inside from the pressures on the system. Where Llive in Soweto, a suburb of

inside, from the pressures on the system. Where I live in Soweto, a suburb of Johannesburg, there are over a million people crammed into sardine cans for houses, children dying of malnutrition, smoking glue to stave off hunger pains. One of these days things are going to explode, and when they do, things will change.

55 COLIN: So in the meantime, you are going to sit around waiting, kowtowing³ to

²Bantustan homelands policy—a policy of segregating black people to specific territories in South Africa ³kowtowing—touching the ground with the forehead as an expression of absolute submission

the Afrikaners, 4 cleaning their boots.

NELSON: Look, man, I went to jail when I was fifteen because I didn't have my pass on me, and it took my family three weeks to find me and bail me out. And during those three weeks in jail I had to defend myself from the most depraved animals you can imagine. You have no idea what it is like to be a black man in South Africa. When I was in jail, I resolved that I was going to be nobody's pawn. I have fought to get where I am, and I am not going to blow it by standing up in some silly student demonstration.

COLIN: You think it is silly? You think it is silly to try to politicize people about what is happening in the rest of the world? Do you think we should sit around in blissful ignorance of the fact that the apartheid philosophy is every bit as evil as Nazism?

NELSON: All right, maybe it's not silly for you. But it would be bloody stupid of me to risk getting my picture in the paper just to say a few words. Do you know what would then happen when I stepped off the plane in Johannesburg? (*Claps his hands.*) Directly to jail.

COLIN (*Laughs*): Do you think the South African police are going to scour the *Oxford Mail* for your mug?

NELSON: You'd be surprised. (Blackout.)

75 SCENE 2

[March 15, 1976, Jan Smuts Airport, Johannesburg, South Africa.] A light comes up on a white immigration official checking passports. NELSON enters wearing a suit and tie and carrying hand luggage.

OFFICIAL: Passport! (NELSON *presents his passport. The official reads.*) "Nelson Malubane." How long have you been away?

NELSON: Since 1971.

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OFFICIAL: Have you finished your studies, or are you returning to England?

NELSON: I've finished. I have a job in Johannesburg.

OFFICIAL: Doing what?

85 **NELSON**: Industrial designer with the Anglo-American Corporation.

OFFICIAL: Hm. Do you have it in writing?

NELSON: Yes. Here. (Hands over a letter.)

OFFICIAL: Hm. (Looks at letter and checks name in official book.) Hm. Yes.

Have a seat, Mr. Malubane. (Blackout.)

⁴Afrikaners—descendents of the Dutch settlers in South Africa

90 Lights come up on a special branch officer sitting at a desk and studying NELSON's passport, letter, and large file. NELSON sits opposite him.

OFFICER: Mr. Malubane. Yes, we've been expecting you. The Bantu industrial designer educated at Oxford University. You were a friend of Edgar Moyo?

NELSON: Yes.

95 **OFFICER**: Are you aware of his politics?

NELSON: He was just another student.

OFFICER: Just another student! He is a member of the Zimbabwe African People's Union.

NELSON: Perhaps.

100 **OFFICER**: What do you mean perhaps? You know he is. Are you a sympathizer of the Zimbabwe African People's Union?

NELSON: No, I'm not interested in politics. My primary interest is in pure mathematics.

OFFICER (Looking through NELSON's dossier):⁵ Not interested in politics? This document in front of me says that you attended the Oxford University Africa Society. Was that not political?

NELSON: It was a social club.

OFFICER: A social club!

NELSON: Some people were political, but mainly it was a way to get together and have a good time.

OFFICER: Is that why it organized a Zimbabwe Action Day in November 1975? Is that why it invited Bishop Muzorewa to speak, as well as Wole Soyinka, Sean Gervasi, Lewis Nkosi, and other well-known communists? Not political!

115 **NELSON**: Well, as I say, some people were political, but I was just interested in seeing friends—other Africans.

OFFICER: Why?

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NELSON: Sorry?

OFFICER: Why should you want to see other Africans?

120 **NELSON**: We had things in common.

OFFICER: What? Politics?

NELSON: No, we organized social evenings, dances, music. I was interested in dancing and socializing. I'm a mathematician. I'm not interested in politics.

OFFICER: Look, you cheeky kaffir, don't try to play silly games with me. Not interested in politics. (*Looks at dossier*.) What is your relationship to Charlie Thompson?

NELSON: Who?

⁵dossier—a collection of papers or documents pertaining to a specific person

⁶kaffir—a derogatory racial reference, a racist slur

OFFICER: And what were you doing last November 25th?

NELSON: November 25th?

130 **OFFICER:** Wasn't there a demonstration at Oxford that day? About Angola?

NELSON: I don't remember. Students often-

OFFICER (*Shows him a photograph*): Isn't that you?

NELSON (*Studies photo*): It might look like me.

OFFICER: Isn't it?

135 **NELSON**: Maybe I was walking by at the time.

OFFICER: Walking by! Then who is that standing next to you?

NELSON: I don't know. I don't recognize him.

OFFICER: It's Charlie Thompson, man.

NELSON: Who is Charlie Thompson?

140 **OFFICER**: Don't give me that. Don't tell me you've never heard of Charlie Thompson, one of the most notorious South African communists.

NELSON: No, I've never heard of him. I told you. I was just walking by and stopped to look at what was going on. You can see I'm carrying my books. I was walking between classes, and I saw a large crowd of people, and so I

stopped to watch what was happening. I only stayed a few minutes. Really, politics bores me. What really interests me is mathematics.

OFFICER: Don't think you can fool us, boy. We know what you have been up to. This file is just one of many on you. The special branch will want to talk to you tomorrow, as well. We will be coming to your home at 125 Orlando

150 West. Ja?

NELSON: Yes.

OFFICER: Yes, what?

NELSON: Yes.

OFFICER: Baas!⁷

155 NELSON: Yes, baas!

OFFICER: Don't think you're European, just because you have been overseas. You are a Bantu, and don't you forget it. Now, you must report immediately to the Non-European Affairs Labor Office in the city as well as the Bantu Administration Office in Soweto to have your pass renewed.

160 NELSON: Yes...baas.

OFFICER: Well, we're glad to have you back.

NELSON: Thank you.

OFFICER: But you better stick to mathematics, or you'll be in big trouble.

(Blackout.)

Steve Wilmer Contemporary American playwright

⁷Baas—boss

IV. Questions 26 to 34 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an essay, published in 1993.

from DOWN ON THE COAST, OUT ON THE PRAIRIE

If you want to climb a mountain in Saskatchewan you have to go downhill first. In Saskatchewan you live on the tops of mountains, on a tabletop that extends forever, broken only by gullies, coulies and river valleys. Climbing up out of the Saskatchewan River valley you ascend to the mountaintop of the great plains. There is a moment at the crest when your eyes meet the prairie and you stare at the great curve of earth as it falls, twenty-one miles away, the farthest you can see. Then you climb the last six feet and step out onto the mountain. Above you are the clouds, their bottoms scraped flat by the horizon. Only on the plains can you see as far as everywhere.

In the distance there is a thunderstorm though you stand in the sun. You watch the lightning but you cannot hear the thunder. The storm is too far away. . . .

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The great plains of Saskatchewan are completely inhabited. From the tree line below Prince Albert to the American border in the south there is not a single piece of land that is not a farm. Only the coulies, the gullies and valleys are left wild, and even they are mostly grazed by cattle. The federal and provincial parks of Saskatchewan are in the north among the trees. There are parks on the open prairie but they are small, a hundred acres, fifty, a bit of land surrounding a tiny lake. The little that is wild must huddle along the fence lines or in the rare clusters of poplar near a slough. . . .

It is this complete habitation of the landscape that has created the intense community of Saskatchewan's peoples. Almost everyone outside of Saskatoon or Regina is self-employed. They are farmers. They own their own land. There are no corporations on the great plains except for the government. . . .

Every twelve or fourteen miles there is a town or village. That was the distance between water for the old steam trains, and while many of these towns and villages are dead or dying, what they represent remains. In the minds of the people, there is always someone next door, there is a neighbour everywhere.

It is nothing in Saskatchewan to drive a hundred miles for a party on a Saturday night, or fifty miles to see a movie. To fly across the prairie is to see a land completely covered by men, women and children. Nothing stands between them. Everywhere they look they see each other. There are more miles of road in Saskatchewan than in any other province. Every quarter section is bounded by a road and the north–south roads are corrected every few miles, to keep them

pointed directly toward the North Pole. Correction lines.This is the West and the West stops at the Rocky Mountains.

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To the peoples of the plains, what lies beyond the bulwark of the Rocky Mountains is the Coast, though the Pacific Ocean is almost a thousand miles away. And the Coast? The Coast is three small enclaves, the Fraser Valley, the port of Prince Rupert at the mouth of the Skeena, and the southern tip of Vancouver Island. The rest of the coastline is uninhabited but for a few small settlements, Bella Coola, Bella Bella, Sechelt, Pender Harbour, Port Renfrew. There are the islands, of course, but they are other places, separate, isolated from the main, just as the whole coast and its peoples are isolated from one another.

There is no communication between them. What happens in Port Alberni is of no real consequence to someone in White Rock. Who has ever been in either place? Who wants to go there?

Between every coastal town something intervenes, a mountain, a fjord, an ocean or a river or a forest. In British Columbia no one goes anywhere. Only business moves you. Pleasure does not. Pleasure is to live in your enclave, within the walls of your city or your town. . . .

On the Coast it takes forever to get anywhere. Fifty miles away from where I write this is Pender Harbour where I have good friends. But it takes a whole day to get there so I never go, I never see them. Once a year, perhaps, no more. And they don't come to see me. For business maybe, but never for pleasure.

The sea and the mountains. They cut you off, they surround you. They are walls and moats. . . . Self-engrossed, isolated, the peoples of the Coast stay where they are. They have no neighbours. Who lives beyond them is someone else, someone unknown, a stranger. The few who do live in the mountains or out on the islands are eccentrics, people who have left civilization behind. They are time-warped, out of place, placeless.

Between the West and the Coast is the Interior. . . . Nowhere in Canada are people more isolated than in the Interior. The Interior is truly nowhere, thin slivers of peoples huddled in the riven clefts of the mountains. Even the Cariboo, that huge undulating plain, is sparsely inhabited. A few ranches and farms and then nothing again, forests, mountains, rivers, all of them impassable, all of them barriers.

You can't see in the Interior. The forest and the mountains are in the way. The clouds aren't flat on the bottom here. When you look at them you look up, straight up. They are round and fluffy, not like on the plains. There is a thunderstorm ten miles away. You can't see the lightning but you can hear the thunder. The sound is from beyond the walls.

Everywhere around you in the Interior is a place called the mountains and no one goes there. They never did, they never will. Occasionally children will venture into the hills but they do not go far. A mile or two for an hour or two, 75 then home to your town as fast as you can. The Interior is not a place to go, it is a place to leave. The peoples of the Coast rarely venture there. Coastal people rarely go anywhere. The peoples of the prairie pass through the Interior to get to the Coast where the Coastal people laugh at them and call them hicks. The prairie people follow one or two thin threads of highway until they reach the sea where 80 they stay for a few days and then turn around and retrace their tracks until they climb out upon the plains. The oppression of the mountains falls away from them as they ride down out of the foothill country. There is light everywhere. What shadows there are move constantly, shifting and changing the light as the clouds move like huge antelope toward the east. The people who have returned from the 85 Coast feel space. It is palpable. Their eves flicker across the great mountaintop as the ranches transform into farms.

There are houses everywhere now. There are people everywhere. The roads go exactly where you expect them to, in straight lines with only the occasional curve. You are always thirteen miles from a tank of gas, an ice cream cone, a cup of coffee. There are no signs saying: "Next services seventy-five miles. Check your gas." A quarter-mile away is a farmer and his wife. They'll lend you gas. They'll give you a hand, or shelter, a conversation. They know their neighbours, their neighbours know them. Fiercely independent, they are totally dependent on each other. They are mostly friends. They will travel thirty miles to meet over a mug on coffee row. There is the weather to talk about and if you don't talk about the weather, you can sit and listen to the wind. It can tell you everything you need to know.

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In Saskatchewan geography does not defeat you as it does on the Coast or in the Interior. It is interesting that you are down "on" the Coast, up "in" the Interior, or "out" on the prairie. Outside, inside, on the edge. If you want to see the wilderness out on the prairie you have to get down on your hands and knees and stare at the earth. Wild things on the prairie are mostly small. There is the sound of the wind everywhere. It is not like a forest on the coast where the silence among the trees is like a heavy weight. You are the tallest living thing on the prairie except for a horse.

There is a single poplar tree in southwest Saskatchewan outside Swift Current. Buses full of school children used to go there so the kids could see it, the only wild tree in a hundred miles. When people pass by it now in their cars, they beep their horns, doing what honour they can to such a strange thing, a tree on the

plains. It is something to be talked about. Something to write articles about, or poems. Along a correction line a hawk is nesting in the tallest thing around, a Saskatoon bush. If you respect her enough and don't get too close you can look down into her nest and watch her fledglings while she cries above you. A farmer told you where she was. He also told you to respect her nest. Later you have coffee with him and his wife. "She's nested there for years," she says and he echoes her, saying, "That's for sure."

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Patrick Lane
Contemporary Canadian poet,
critic, and fiction writer

V. Questions 35 to 42 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

LIFE FOR MY CHILD IS SIMPLE, AND IS GOOD

Life for my child is simple, and is good. He knows his wish. Yes, but that is not all. Because I know mine too.

And we both want joy of undeep and unabiding things,

- 5 Like kicking over a chair or throwing blocks out of a window Or tipping over an icebox pan¹ Or snatching down curtains or fingering an electric outlet Or a journey or a friend or an illegal kiss.
 No. There is more to it than that.
- 10 It is that he has never been afraid.
 Rather, he reaches out and lo the chair falls with a beautiful crash,
 And the blocks fall, down on the people's heads,
 And the water comes slooshing sloopily out across the floor.
 And so forth.
- Not that success, for him, is sure, infallible.
 But never has he been afraid to reach.
 His lesions are legion.²
 But reaching is his rule.

Gwendolyn Brooks
Contemporary American poet and novelist

¹icebox pan—a shallow pan that collected melt water from blocks of ice used to cool food before refrigerators were common

²His lesions are legion—his cuts and bruises are many

VI. Questions 43 to 55 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a novel.



This excerpt is set in a farming community in Manitoba in 1914, the first year of the First World War. It is harvest time (late summer or early autumn); the thresher (a machine used for separating grain from straw and husk) and its crew are working from farm to farm until all the crops are in.

from GRAIN

With the outbreak of war Jo wondered whether Gander would enlist. Nothing was further from her hopes than that anything should happen to Gander, but in those early stages the risk of casualty was considered small. The whole neighbourhood shared Double F s opinion that the war would be over in three months, but to wear a uniform and march away with bands playing was an heroic gesture. . . . It was yet too early in the struggle to see anything heroic in raising wheat. Jo was proud of Gander, but she was not blind to his defects. He was awkward; he was shy; the boundary of his world was little further than his father s farm. Enlistment would change all that. Like any honest girl, she was not satisfied that she alone should be proud of Gander; she wanted other people to be 10 proud of him. She wanted to see the stoop taken out of his back, the hitch out of his gait, the drag out of his legs. Then, when the papers began to glare with reports of atrocities in Belgium, she wanted the heroic in Gander to well up and send him rushing to arms, to the defence of womankind, to the defence of 15 Josephine Burge! Gander's heroism did nothing so spectacular. He went on

¹atrocities in Belgium upon Germany s invasion of Belgium in August of 1914 there were confirmed and unconfirmed reports of Belgian civilians being executed

working fourteen hours a day in the harvest field, associating with his father a little more closely than before, and trying to keep the war out of his mind.

... With Gander as with most others, it was a matter of perspective. He was not lacking in courage or in a spirit of readiness to defend his home; if an enemy battalion had appeared on the road allowance that skirted his father's farm Gander would have faced them singlehanded with his breech-loading shotgun. He might even have marched into Plainville to resist their landing in his market town. But Belgium? Gander was unable to visualize a danger so remote.

In the meantime his activities were so centralized upon the firing and driving of Bill Powers' engine that the war gave him no great concern. Its chief visible effect was the number of boys of his own age or younger working on the outfit. Already there had been a thinning out of the classes from twenty-five to thirty-five years old, and youngsters not long out of school were stepping up to take their places. Some of these openly looked forward to the day when they might enlist, and hoped that the war would not end too soon; but most of them, and particularly those who were already eighteen or nearly so, showed a reticence² about discussing the matter at all. Something inside was troubling vaguely, and they found an opiate³ in work.

Gander fired for Bill Powers for the remainder of the season with only one incident that seems worth recording. That occurred when they were threshing at Martin Burge's. Gander, although hired as fireman and drawing fireman's wages, was practically engineer; old Bill gave little thought to the power end of his plant except when moving from set to set or along the country roads from farm to farm. Then Gander fired and Bill handled the engine. To make a Y turn, couple on to a separator, 4 and pull out across the fields without a foot of wasted motion is not learned in a day. Gander never failed to thrill with pride in his boss when, the moment the belt was thrown, he manœuvred the engine through that sharp turn in the shape of a Y, backed up to the separator, calculating his distance and momentum to a nicety at the risk of his life—more than one engineer has been crushed to death between separator and engine as the price of a moment's misjudgement—coupled on, and was away almost before the pulleys had quit revolving or the last gust of straw had been blown from the stacker. Powers was greasy and bent, and masked such real features as he must have possessed behind a dust-filled black stubble of beard, but he was the only man aside from Jackson Stake in whom Gander ever had caught a glimpse of the heroic.

It was about ten in the morning when they pulled into Burge's. Martin Burge

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²reticence—reluctance, unwillingness

³opiate—something that dulls the senses

⁴separator—the machine in the threshing operation that receives the sheaves in cavernous jaws and separates the grain from the stalks

had cut his pasture fence in two places to save a detour around by the farm buildings and the consequent loss of valuable time, and Powers navigated his craft over the bare pasture, down the side of a shallow gulley, across its hard gravel bottom, up the other bank, through the temporary gate in the barbed-wire fence, and into the hundred-acre wheatfield of Martin Burge to which it gave admittance. The bundle teams, having taken a short cut by means of a culvert which could not be trusted to support the engine, were already in the field loading. . . .

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Martin Burge walked ahead, indicating the route to a favourable location for the set; Bill Powers stood at the throttle, the steering-wheel in his hand, the front truck of his engine jerking from side to side like a mighty caterpillar, yet following a course that was almost direct, Gander stoking with straw from a wagon drawn alongside and with one eye on the water gauge and the other on the steam; behind them the great hulk of the separator dragging heavily in the soft soil of the cultivated field; behind that again the caboose⁵ with two or three men riding. . . . At a suitable spot Powers stopped; the caboose was uncoupled and left standing in the field; then engine and separator moved on again to the place indicated by Mr. Burge. Here Powers again slacked back while the separator was uncoupled, then, reversing his Y manœuvre, swung his engine out, around, and quickly into place. Meanwhile two men ran out from the separator with the belt, measuring the

distance to the spot where the engine should stand, but Powers from long practice had judged it almost as well with his eye. Without a wasted motion he brought his engine to the stop, swung the belt on to the flywheel with the last impulse of its dying momentum, and shouted to his fireman, "All set, Gander. Let 'er go!"

Gander touched the whistle cord and gently opened the throttle; the first two bundle wagons, already loaded, drew up beside the feeder; the blades began to revolve, the spiked slats to slide up the incline, and a moment later the high whine of the threshing cylinder deepened to a roar as the first sheaves⁶ were gulped into its iron jaws. Gander, observing that his engine had taken its gait, dropped down from the throttle, replenished his fire, and walked around to the front of the boiler in a mood of casual inspection. It was then he noticed that the pitcher⁷ on the lefthand bundle wagon was young Walter Peters, who had brought a team over from his father's farm that morning to reinforce Powers' somewhat depleted staff. Walter had been one of the little boys going to school when Gander left it; he was not yet more than fifteen or sixteen, slim and straight and willing but without 85 either the weight or the skill for a spike-pitcher. His parents were ambitious to make a doctor of him, because (so they thought) medicine gives a much easier

⁵caboose—a mobile bunkhouse or cookhouse used by threshing crews

⁶sheaves—heavy bundles of cut stalks of grain brought in from the fields on large horse-drawn wagons ⁷pitcher/spike-pitcher—the men who pitch the sheaves onto the wagon in the field, or into the separator at the threshing site

living than farming, and he had been attending high school in Plainville until called home to help with the threshing. Gander watched him for a moment, noting that while not altogether unskilful with his fork he was flustered with the responsibility of his position, sometimes getting two sheaves at once and occasionally missing his thrust altogether.

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"Must speak to Powers about him," Gander suggested to himself. "Not heavy enough for that job. Put him drivin' a grain team, or somethin'." But at that moment the boy, having thrust the head of his fork under the band of a sheaf so that it became caught in a cord, threw fork and all onto the feeding-table. Realizing the damage that would be done to the machinery and the shame which would engulf him for such a blunder, he lurched forward frantically for the fork, now floating up the carriers just beyond his reach, lost his balance, and himself fell on the moving sheaf! There was a chance that the carriers would stick with this extra weight, but the lad was light and they swept him up toward the knives like straw for the threshing.

Gander's decision was instantly taken. It was impossible to stop the engine in time; before he could so much as reach the throttle the boy would be chopped to pieces. But the great belt was rushing by within a yard of Gander's arm. To hurl himself upon it, with his whole force striving to run it off the flywheel, was the work of an instant. It whirled him from his feet, carried him for a moment like a leaf on some dark and rapid stream, then suddenly leapt from the wheel and fell like a serpent writhing in the stubble. At the same instant the spike-catcher⁸ on the opposite wagon, who had seen the accident and had his wits about him threw a sheaf crosswise straight into the blades. Choked with this sudden load and with its power cut off, the separator stopped like a ship upon a rock. Someone reached a hand to Walter and he climbed sheepishly back onto his load.

"Mustn't take a chance like that," said one of the older men severely. "You'll make a sausage machine of old Bill's straw-hasher."

Meanwhile Powers, who had observed the latter part of the accident, came rushing as fast as his crooked legs would carry him to where Gander lay entangled in the belt. "For God's sake, Gander, are you killed?" he cried.

Gander dragged himself clear of the belt and staggered to his feet. "Nope, I guess not," he announced, when he had rubbed some of his more prominent protrusions. "Guess I'm all right; jus' kind o' lost my wind for a minute. How's little Watt? Did he get hurt at all?"

Peters, described as "little Watt" as a hangover from school-day recollections but now as tall as Gander, came up beside him.

125 "Thanks, Gander," he said, extending his hand. "That was awful decent. I hope you didn't get hurt."

⁸spike-catcher—man on the wagons whose job is to catch the sheaves that are pitched to him

Gander, now feeling the more sheepish of the two, grasped the proffered hand. "Oh, that's nothin'—I'm all right," he said. Then, as an outlet for his embarrassment, "Come on, fellows! Give a heave with this belt! We've lost about twenty bushels' time already."

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At noon Gander found himself the hero of the hour. He had not quite forgotten that they were threshing at Jo Burge's home, and he drew on a less soiled smock and raked the chaff out of his hair before going in to dinner. Mrs Burge and Jo were at work in the big kitchen, Mrs Burge poring over the stove and a side table on which great stacks of food were piled, Jo waiting on the men. She looked neat and trim in her plain housedress, with her fair hair drawn in a mass at the back of her head and the little points of freckles peering through her white skin. She smiled at Gander as he slouched to a place at the table but did not speak; she was too engaged in serving hot tea into the great cups that sat by the thresher-men's plates.

"Well, we got a hero among us," said one of the gang. "Gander, get up and be presented with the Victoria Cross⁹ or whatever it is a man gets for being a fool an' livin' through it."

Gander humped himself over a full plate of beef and potatoes while his Adam's apple jumped from his shirt band to a sheltered position between his jaws. "'Twasn't nothin'," he said. "Anybody 'ud o' done it."

"That's what I read in the papers," said another. "These great men in the war—all modest as schoolma'ams."

Gander, and some of the others, wished they would keep off the war for a bit. Bill Powers waited until the banter had subsided so that his pronouncement might have a proper hearing. Then:

"Well, all I got to say is, in thirty years' threshin', it's the quickest thinkin'—and doin'—I ever seen." And having spoken, Powers slashed into his meat with knife and fork, as though to indicate that the last word on the subject had been said.

But it hadn't. "Shucks!" remarked another member of the gang, "I've run that belt off myself as often as there's hair on Hector."

This brought Bill to arms. "You have, eh? From where? That's what I'm askin'. From halfway down to the sep'rator! Anybody can do that, when you've got room to run an' lots o' purchase on it. Huh! I've seen the wind blow it off, if you give it sweep enough. But ten feet from the flywheel—that's diff'rent. If he'd gone under that wheel he'd been jus' like a fly under your foot—"

"Or in the soup," suggested another.

"I guess it's young Watt here would have been in the soup, an' cut good an'

⁹Victoria Cross—(VC) award for bravery, awarded to members of the Commonwealth armed services

fine at that," said the first speaker, "if that headpiece of Gander's had been as empty as it looks. I'm for the Victoria Cross! The presentation'll take place tonight, an' Miss Burge'll pin it on our hero's gallant breast—won't you, Jo?"

The rapid development from "Miss Burge" to "Jo" in a single sentence was typical of the threshers' conventions. During a visit of the threshers a farm girl is *ex officio*, ¹⁰ a member of the gang.

Then Jo spoke. "Maybe he'll wear a real VC there some day, for all you know." And for some reason that brought the banter to a close.

But after dinner she found occasion for one word with Gander. "That was a brave thing, Gander," she said. "I'm very proud of you."

And what was the Victoria Cross to that?

Robert J.C. Stead (1880–1959)
Canadian writer

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¹⁰ex officio—because of her position in the family

VII. Questions 56 to 63 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an article.

from TALES FROM THE CUTTING-ROOM¹ FLOOR

MAY 6, 1992

Yesterday I applied for a job as a "story analyst" at American Detective, a prime-time "realitybased" cop show on ABC that I've never seen. The interview took place in Malibu at the program's production office. . . . I was greeted by the "story department" manager, who explained that every day the 10 show has camera crews in four different cities trailing detectives as they break into every type of home and location to search, confiscate, interrogate, and arrest. (The crews have the right to do this, he told me, because they have been "deputized" by the local police department. What exactly this means I was not told.) They shoot huge amounts of 20 videotape and it arrives every day, rushed to Malibu by Federal Express. Assistants tag and timecode each video before turning it over to the story department.

After talking about the job, the story-department manager sat me in front of a monitor and gave me two hours to "analyze" a video. I watched the camera pan through a dilapidated trailer while a detective searched for incriminating evidence.

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He found money in a small yellow suitcase, discovered a knife under a sofa, and plucked a tiny, twisted marijuana butt from a swan-shaped ashtray. I typed each act into a computer. It took me forty-five minutes to make what seemed a meaningless record. When I got home this afternoon there was a message on my phone machine from the story-department manager congratulating me on a job well done and welcoming me to *American Detective*. I am pleased.

MAY 18, 1992

Although we're officially called story analysts, in-house we're referred to as "the loggers." Each of 50 us has a computer/VCR/print monitor/TV screen/headphone console looming in front of us like a colossal dashboard. Settling into my chair is like squeezing into a small cockpit. The camera crews seem to go everywhere: Detroit, New York, Miami, Las Vegas, Pittsburgh, Phoenix, Portland, Santa 60 Cruz, Indianapolis, San Jose. They join up with local police teams and apparently get access to everything the cops do. They even wear blue

¹Cutting-Room—room in which film is edited (cut and spliced). During the editing process, strips of rejected film may be left on the floor to be cleaned up later.

jackets with POLICE in yellow letters on the back. The loggers scrutinize each hour-long tape second by second, and make a running log of every visual and auditory element that can be used to "create" a story. On an average day the other three loggers and I look at twenty to forty tapes, and in any given week we analyze from 6,000 to 12,000 minutes of film.

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The footage comes from handheld "main" and "secondary" cameras as well as tiny, wirelike "lock-down" cameras taped to anything that might provide a view of the scene: car doors, window visors, and even on one occasion-in order to record drug deals inside an undercover vehicle—a gear-shift handle. Once a videotape is viewed, the logger creates a highlight reel-a fifteenminute distillation of the overall "bust" or "case." The tapes and scripts are then handed over to the supervising producer, who in turn works with technical editors to create an episode of the show, each of which begins with this message on the screen: "What you are about to see is real. There are no recreations. Everything was filmed while it actually happened." There are, I've learned, quite a

few of these reality and "fact-based" shows now, with names like *Cops*, *Top Cops*, and *FBI: The Untold*

Stories. Why the national obsession with this sort of voyeuristic² entertainment? Perhaps we want to believe the cops are still in control. The preponderance³ of these shows is also related to the bottom line: they are extremely inexpensive to produce. After all, why create an elaborate car-chase sequence

a minute when a crew with a couple of video cameras can ride around with the cops and get the "real" thing? Why engage a group of talented writers and producers to make intelligent and exciting TV when it's more profitable to dip into the endless pool of human grief? . . .

MAY 26, 1992

120 I'm learning the job. Among other tasks, we're responsible for compiling stock-footage books—volumes of miscellaneous images . . . of guns, drugs, money, scenics, street signs, appliances, and interior house shots. This compendium is used to embellish stories when certain images or sounds have not been picked up . . . by [the] camera:

130 a close-up of a suspect's tightly cuffed wrists missed in a rush, a scream muffled by background traffic noise. Or, most frequently, the shouts of the cops on a raid ("POLICE! Open the door! Now!")

²voyeuristic—from *voyeur*, a person who gains illicit pleasure from watching the actions of others ³preponderance—excessive number

⁴embellish—to heighten the effect of

in an otherwise unexciting ramrod affair. Evidently the "reality" of a given episode is subject to enhancement. . . .

140 JUNE 3, 1992

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Today was the first day I got to log Lieutenant Bunnell, which is considered a great honor in the office. Lieutenant Bunnell is the show's mascot, the venerated spokesperson. Only two years ago he was an ordinary narcotics detective in Oregon. Today he has a six-figure income, an agent, fans all over the country, and the best voice coach in Hollywood. . . .

At the beginning of each episode, Lieutenant Bunnell sets the scene for the viewer, . . . painting a picture of the crimes at hand and describing the challenges the detectives face. He also participates in many of these raids, since he is, after all, still a police lieutenant. The standard fare: Act I, Bunnell's suspenseful introduction: Act II, Bunnell leads his team on a raid; Act III, Bunnell captures the bad suspect and throws him in the squad car, etc. The format for each drama must fit into an eleven-minute segment. So it is that although American Detective and its competitors seem a long way from . . . all the famous old cop shows, they follow the same

formula, the same dramatic arc, because this is what the viewers and advertisers have come to expect. . . .

JUNE 15, 1992

I'm developing a perverse fascination with the magic exercised in our TV production sweatshop. Once our supervising producer has picked the cases that might work for 180 the show, the "stories" are turned over to an editor. Within a few weeks the finished videos emerge from the editing room with "problems" fixed, chronologies reshuffled, and, when necessary, images and sound bites clipped and replaced by old filler footage from unrelated cases.

By the time our 9 million viewers 190 flip on their tubes, we've reduced fifty or sixty hours of mundane and compromising video into short, action-packed segments of tantalizing . . . cop culture. How easily we downplay the pathos⁵ of the suspect; how cleverly we breeze past the complexities that cast doubt on the very system that has produced the criminal activity in the first place. How effortlessly we 200 smooth out the indiscretions of the lumpen⁶ detectives and casually make them appear as pistol-flailing heroes rushing across the screen. Watching a finished episode of

⁵pathos—circumstances that deserve or arouse our pardon or compassion ⁶lumpen—boorish, ignorant, awkward

American Detective, one easily forgets that the detectives are, for the most part, men whose lives are overburdened with formalities and paperwork....

JUNE 26, 1992

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Today . . . the supervising producer emerged from his airconditioned nightmare and leaned over my desk. "We'll have a crew covering Detroit over the weekend," he said. "Maybe we'll get a good homicide for you to work on." I was speech-less. I've never seen a homicide, and I have no interest in seeing one. But I'm working in a place where a grisly homicide is actually welcomed. . . . After work, I prayed for benevolence, goodwill, and peace in Detroit.

JUNE 29, 1992

My prayers must have worked—

no Detroit homicide case came in today. That doesn't mean, however,

230 that I'm any less complicit⁸ in what is clearly a sordid enterprise. This afternoon I analyzed a tape that features detectives busting a motley¹⁰ assortment of small-time pot dealers and getting them to "flip" on their connections. The freshly cuffed "crook" then becomes a C.I. (confidential informant). Rigged with hidden wires and 240 cameras, the C.I. works for the

detectives by setting up his friends in drug busts that lead up the ladder. In exchange for this, the C.I. is promised a more lenient sentence when his day comes up in court. Some of the C.I.'s have been busted so many times before that they are essentially professional informants. Ironically, some have actually

250 learned how the game is played by watching reality-based cop shows.

> Debra Seagal Contemporary American freelance writer

⁷grisly—gruesome, hideous, horrible ⁸complicit—involved as an accomplice in wrongdoing

⁹sordid—morally degraded, motivated only by financial gain

¹⁰ motley—varied

VIII. After reading "Tales from the Cutting-Room Floor," Robin decided to write to the Canadian Radio-Television & Telecommunications Commission to state her concern about "reality-based" shows. Read the first draft of Robin's letter, carefully noting her revisions, and answer questions 64 to 70 in your Questions Booklet.

May 3, 2000

Dear Commission Members:

understand demonstrate valuable
I hear that citizens who show that they have a good contribution to make can

A Television
talk to the Canadian Radio-TV & Telecommunications Commission when it has give address
hearings in their communities? I would like to make a five-minute speech when
the Commission is in Nalwen on June 4, 2000.

I have read alot on the impact of television that talks about the influences of sex most, unique and violence on viewers. I was impressed however with the ideas of Debra Seagal, writer of "Tales from the Cutting-Room Floor." With the help of her editor, I was able to obtain Ms. Seagal's address and exchange letters with her.

Debra Seagal doesn't just say the usual things about television. She draws on

her past experience as a story analyst for *American Detective*, a well-known "reality-based" police show on ABC. Her job was to select the best possible story elements from hours of videotapes made by camera crews observing real

15 policemen. She learned that the programs are sold as "real," but sounds and pictures are added to make the stories more exciting. More important, in Debra's such as view, is what is left out, including topics like the causes of crime and the effects

A The truth is left on the cutting-room floor. that crime has on all of us. Debra learned a lot of things.

Continued

Like Debra Seagal says, audiences take their expectations with them when they watch police shows, and they want the shows to follow a formula. For example, as a result of watching such shows, drug users who get caught know how to become informants because they have already seen how informants act on police several television. Although the cops may make a ton of mistakes, television pictures waving guns, them busting into this guy's home, waving guns, and looking like heroes. The truth is that the police spend much of there time checking details and writing reports. It isn't exciting at all. Debra Seagal reveals the truth.

Viewing audiences want to see problems with simple answers. If producers simplify events to suggest that every policeman is "good" and every criminal is "bad," viewers may conclude that there should be more police. But providing more police does not end the problem. It just treats the symptom. We need to think about what causes crime and how we can prevent crime. Some day we problems have to take our heads out of the sand and admit that these things are complicated. What, you may ask, has all this to do with my speaking to you? Like Ms. Seagal, I worked in a television studio, and I can tell you that the media does mislead viewers. I would be pleased to share my experiences with you on June 4, 2000, in Nalwen.

Sincerely yours,

Robin Smith

Robin Smith

Credits

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English 33: Part B June 2000

